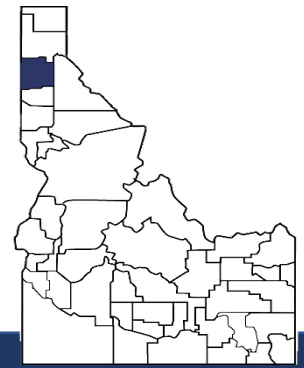




# Kootenai County Drug Trends

*This report summarizes major trends related to illicit drug use and trafficking in Kootenai County, Idaho based on available open-source statistics and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) supported law enforcement efforts.*



HIDTA DESIGNATED - 2020

## County Snapshot

Kootenai County is nearly 1,237 square miles and the county seat, Coeur d'Alene, is the largest metropolitan area in the county. Based on census data reported by the United States Census Bureau, Kootenai County is home to an estimated 183,578 residents, which is 9.5% of the state's population, and the third most populous county in Idaho.<sup>10</sup> This report summarizes the impact of illicit drug use and trafficking throughout the county.

Based on law enforcement and public health data reported during 2023, fentanyl and methamphetamine continue to impact communities throughout Kootenai County. According to task force officers surveyed, fentanyl is the most significant drug threat due to high availability and overdose incidents, followed by methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Fentanyl in powder form as well as heroin and cocaine increased in availability in the county.

Fatal and non-fatal overdose incidents continue to impact communities in Idaho from pill and powder forms of fentanyl present in the illicit drug supply lines. Informal reporting by law enforcement and public health partners indicates people who use drugs (PWUD) desire to use fentanyl in powder form continues to be popular due to the unpredictable dosing of fentanyl in pill form. According to harm reduction partners, the PWUD community reports concern over the number of overdoses related to pill use and believes the powder is safer, allowing for more control over consistent dosing. Rising seizures of powder fentanyl throughout the United States and the presence in the local drug supply reflect this change in fentanyl use and add additional public health and safety concerns throughout the county.

## Drug Availability and Use Trends

Substance use disorders in Idaho continue to impact communities through the rising number of deaths related to drug use. According to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare website, drug-induced deaths in the state rose 8% between 2021 (353) and 2022 (381), with preliminary reporting of 251 deaths occurring as of September 2023.<sup>11</sup> Fentanyl was identified in 188 overdose deaths in 2022, up 24% from the 152 deaths reported in 2021. Methamphetamine was identified in 133 overdose deaths and when combined with fentanyl numbers, the two were identified in nearly 87% of reported overdose deaths in 2022. Preliminary numbers published in November 2023 identified 148 fentanyl-related deaths so far in 2023 in the state, a slight decrease from the same time frame in 2022 (164) but is expected to rise once the 2023 coroner report data is finalized. County-level overdose death numbers were not available at the time of this publication.

In 2023, task force officers seized 10 kilograms of methamphetamine, 14,489 fentanyl pills, and 0.1 kilograms of heroin, along with 5.6 kilograms of marijuana (see Figure 1, page 2). In addition to drug seizures, task force officers

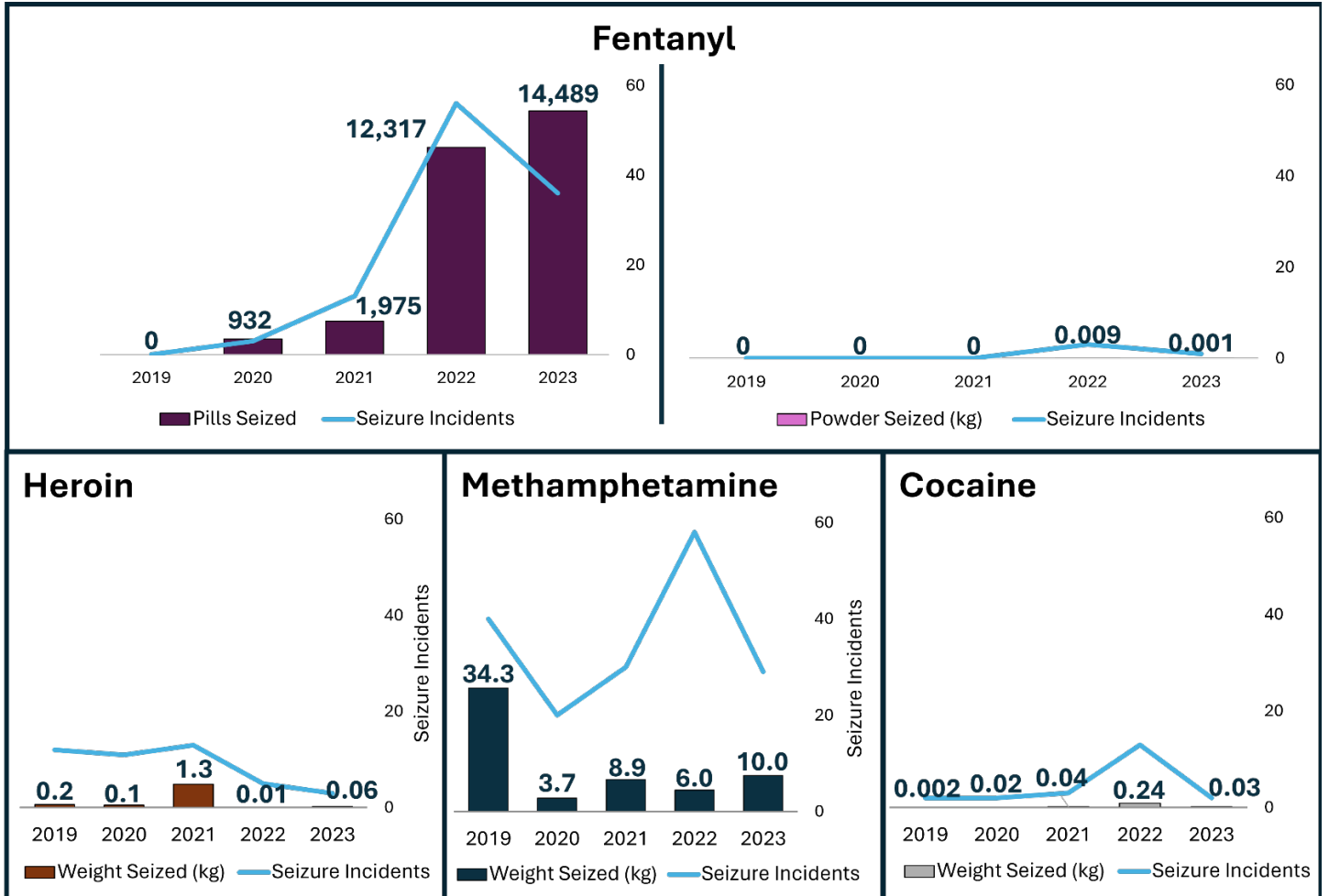
<sup>10</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Drug Overdose Prevention Program | Idaho – Idaho Department of Health and Welfare – Accessed 2/1/24](#)

conducted 17 drug-related arrests and seized 11 firearms and \$31,213 in cash and assets. In 2023, NINE seized one clandestine cannabis extraction lab related to dimethyltryptamine (DMT). Cash and asset seizures conducted by the Idaho State Police (ISP) Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) are captured under the statewide initiatives and not broken out by location in the HIDTA Performance Management Process (PMP).

Figure 1

Total of Illicit Drugs Seized by Idaho HIDTA Designated Enforcement Initiatives



Source: Oregon-Idaho HIDTA Performance Management Process (PMP) – Accessed 01/31/24

### Drug Trafficking Trends

Mexico continues to be the primary source country for methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin, and transited cocaine trafficked throughout Kootenai County. Once across the southwest border of the United States, illicit drugs are transported through California and Arizona to the neighboring northern states. From active drug investigations and survey responses, Spokane, Washington has been identified as a local supply area for many of the HIDTA task forces operating in Kootenai County.

North Idaho Narcotics Enforcement (NINE) disrupted or dismantled two drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) during 2023, both involved in trafficking fentanyl and cocaine in addition to methamphetamine, psilocybin, and/or hallucinogens. Two of the DTOs were identified as international with operational connections to Mexico and

three were multi-state operations. Both DTOs were identified as multi-state in scope with one connected to a violent outlaw motorcycle gang.

### **Current Countywide Efforts**

Within Kootenai County, NINE is the HIDTA-designated task force that receives federal funding and support from the HIDTA program along with federal partners from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, US Customs and Border Protection, and DEA from Spokane, Washington. Along with enforcement efforts by this task force, two statewide HIDTA initiatives assist in investigations throughout the county and coordinate efforts with other HIDTA task forces. ISP DHE conducts interdiction efforts throughout the state and coordinates with other HIDTA task forces to assist in long-term investigations, while DEA Spokane conducts drug investigations in coordination with NINE and law enforcement agencies in Kootenai County.

In addition to the enforcement initiatives, the Oregon-Idaho HIDTA program provides resources and support for a public health analyst, who is funded by the Center for Disease Control Foundation, and a drug intelligence officer who collaborate to bring public health and law enforcement partners together focusing on overdose reduction and responses to overdoses as a part of the Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) and prevention. Through this cooperative effort these professional fields, which have traditionally operated separately, work to increase the sharing of real-time trends and emerging drug threats that impact communities.

### **Outlook**

The fentanyl crisis continues to increase across the nation which is consistent throughout Idaho and Kootenai County. With supply and demand increasing annually and a consistent supply of methamphetamine and cocaine, the need for resources to support law enforcement efforts is critical. This support includes the focus on supply reduction through law enforcement efforts and public health's focus on demand reduction through prevention, treatment, and harm reduction. Participation by local, state, and federal law enforcement in multi-agency task force initiatives combined with federal resources has proven to be successful in targeting organizations responsible for importing and trafficking illicit drugs within the state. Cooperative efforts through public safety and prevention messaging among public health and law enforcement are necessary to help provide residents with timely information and resources to combat the drug threats facing all communities in Kootenai County.

Your feedback regarding this report is important to us and is a measured performance metric.

Please complete and submit the brief survey by following this link: [ISACC Strategic Report Survey](#)

*This product was created by the Oregon-Idaho HIDTA Information Sharing and Analytical Coordination Center (ISACC)*